

Children's Environmental Health Starts at Home

In the past year, 1,524 children, aged 6 months to 6 years have been screened in Lancaster County for elevated blood lead levels. Elevated blood lead levels have dropped from 11.5% of children screened in 1995 to 2.4% of those tested in 2001. Sixty-four percent of children tested were under three years of age.



PROTECTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH IN OUR HOMES & SCHOOLS

School/Community Tobacco Prevention Program

The tobacco prevention program focuses on two goals: to prevent children from starting to use tobacco and to protect workers and the public from exposure to secondhand smoke. The Health Department and its many partners are using a comprehensive approach of education, counter-advertising, media, youth activities, tobacco cessation quitline, and policy change to reduce the hazards of tobacco use and secondhand smoke.



Healthy Homes

Healthy Homes outreach specialists work with women of many cultures to help them overcome obstacles including access to health care, language barriers, poverty, substance abuse, lack of education, and domestic violence. Community support for the Healthy Homes Program has become increasingly important, especially with the Teddy Bear Cottage. Here, women can use points earned by practicing healthy behaviors to purchase diapers, clothing, and other supplies so desperately needed by the young mothers. The "showers" held by churches, businesses, and organizations help supply the Teddy Bear Cottage with these needed items, and the volunteer time by the Kiwanis Clubs of Lincoln provide the hours of operation.



School Health Services

- ✓ Last year, over 33,158 school screenings were provided by public health nurses in collaboration with the school nurses and health aides.
- ✓ Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department directly served 10,414 students in rural, parochial and private schools.
- ✓ Health information articles on cryptosporidiosis; immunizations; hand, foot and mouth disease; shigellosis; tuberculosis; Fifth's Disease; varicella; diphtheria; rubella; influenza and anthrax were written and distributed to Lancaster County Schools.

HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

This past year 1629 families were visited in their homes where nurses encouraged healthy prenatal behaviors and development of strong parenting and infant care skills. As a result, home visited mothers were twice as likely as their peers to stop smoking and breastfeed their new infants. Nurses visit pregnant women and their infants up to one year of age or until the family is successfully managing parenting.



Early Development Services Coordination

The goal of Early Development Services Coordination is to give families a good start in supporting the needs of their children (birth to three) with a disability or developmental delay. The Services Coordinators assisted 377 families to develop additional skills in accessing and coordinating services for their child and family. The project is a highly successful collaboration with Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska Health and Human Services System, Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln Early Childhood Planning Region Team, hospitals, and other community agencies. Because the provision of needed services at critical times of development enhances the chances for more positive outcomes for the children and their families, the program targets outreach efforts to assure more referrals before age two.